



BURGLARY TIPS: PROTECT YOUR HOME

Doors

■ Exterior Doors

Many residential doors feature hollow-core construction and poor locks, which are easily forced or kicked open. For additional protection, you need solid core doors and quality locks.

■ Sliding Glass Doors

Many burglars enter homes through improperly secured sliding glass doors. Additional locks and security measures will prevent the door from being opened or lifted out of the track.

Screws installed in the track above the sliding door frame will prevent the door from being lifted out of the track. Drill a pilot hole in the top track above, and slightly in, from each corner of the sliding doorframe section and install a screw into each hole. Adjust the screws so that the head of the screw just barely clears the frame when it is moved back and forth. Locking bars for sliding glass doors are available at most large hardware stores. A broom stick or large dowel in the bottom door track will prevent the door from being opened if the lock is defeated.

■ Double Doors

These doors need solid security as they are easily jimmied or forced open. Flush lever bolts installed at the top and bottom of the doors are recommended. Make sure the bolt is long, sturdy and mounted into a solid door frame. Double doors are one of the easiest doorways to defeat without extra security measures.

■ Doors with Windows

Doors with glass windows or glass ornamentation require double key deadbolt locks. This prevents the burglar from breaking the glass and reaching inside to unlock the door.

The key to a double key deadbolt lock should be left in the lock at all times when someone is home to ensure easy exit in the event of a fire or other emergency.

■ Garage Doors

Standard locks on garage doors are easily pried, allowing a burglar access to your home without detection. Cane bolts and hasps are excellent protection. Make certain each side of the garage door is secured to prevent prying open a crawl space. Any door leading from the garage into the house should be securely locked. The more barriers you provide against the burglar, the better protected you are.

■ Hinges

Many homes have doors that open to the outside, exposing the hinge pins. Despite a good strong lock, the burglar can remove the pins and lift the door from the frame.

To prevent this, remove two opposing screws from each leaf of the hinge. Screw a long lag bolt into the frame side of the hinge leaf and saw off the head leaving about 1/2 inch protruding. Drill out the

opposite hole to allow the bolt to enter when the door is closed. Do this to the top and bottom hinge plates. The burglar can remove the hinge pins, but the door will remain firmly in place. This technique is good for any door, no matter how the hinges have been placed.

■ **Door Viewers**

To avoid opening your door without knowing who is there, install a door viewer. This device has a wide-angle lens to let you see someone standing outside your door without opening it.

Latches/Locks

■ **Spring Latch**

Some homes come equipped with this lock. It offers very little protection since the bolt can be slipped with a credit card or knife. This same lock, with a deadbolt latch, provides more protection, but it too can be forced open.

■ **Deadbolt Locks**

A deadbolt lock can provide good protection. When you turn the key, the lock mechanism slides a strong metal bolt from the door into the frame. When you buy a deadbolt lock, make sure that the bolt extends at least one inch from the edge of the door, the connecting screws that hold the lock together are on the inside of the door, the strike plate is attached to the door frame with screws that measure at least three inches in length and that the cylinder has a steel guard around the key section. The cylinder guard should be tapered or rotate freely around the key section to prevent wrenching if it is twisted.

■ **Single Cylinder Deadbolt**

A solid bolt, activated by a key from the outside or a knob on the inside, slides into the doorframe. The lock cannot be slipped or easily pried. Deadbolt locks are only as good as the door and frame they are installed in.

■ **Double Cylinder Deadbolt**

This lock is basically the same as the single cylinder deadbolt, except that it requires a key to be used from either side to function.

■ **Padlocks**

When selecting padlocks to secure your garage door, storage shed, fence gate or toolbox, do not economize. Low-priced locks are made from low quality materials and easily pried open or cut with bolt cutters. Look for these features when purchasing a padlock:

- Double locking shackle at the toe and heel
- Hardened steel shackle, the larger the diameter the better
- Five pin tumbler
- Key retaining feature (prevents removal of the key when unlocked)
- A strong steel hasp used with the padlock

Windows

■ **Sliding Windows**

Sliding glass windows should be given the same security treatment as arcadia doors. Use the same supplementary locks or screws in the frame. Screws installed in the track above the sliding window frame will prevent the window from being lifted out of the track. Another method is to drill a pilot hole in the top track above each corner of the window frame and install a screw into each hole. Adjust the screws so that the head of the screw just barely clears the frame when it is moved back and forth.

■ Casement - Crank Windows

These windows are easily secured. The latch should close properly with the window tight. With the latch in a closed position, drill a small hole through the latch frame and handle. Insert a metal pin through the hole to lock the window. For additional security, a small padlock can be used in place of the pin. Key operated replacement latches are also available from a locksmith or hardware store. Keep the key handy in case of emergency.

■ Double Hung Windows

An easy, inexpensive way to secure your windows is to use the "pin" trick. Drill an angled hole through the top frame of the lower window partially into the frame of the upper window. Then insert the pin (a nail or an eyebolt that is slightly smaller in diameter than the hole). The window can't be opened until you remove the pin. Make a second set of holes with windows partially open so you can have ventilation without inviting intruders. You also may purchase special key locks for windows at a hardware store.

Key Security

- Never hide keys under a mat, or taped above a door jamb: Burglars know these places.
- Leave a key with a trusted neighbor.
- Don't place identification tags on your key or key or key rings.

While On Vacation

- Maintain the appearance of occupancy at all times.
- Use automatic timers to turn on different lights at different times.
- Have a trusted neighbor pick up your mail and newspapers. And, occasionally use your garbage cans.
- Most break-ins occur between 10 am and 3 pm. Put a radio or a TV on a timer. Turn the ringer on the telephone down.
- Register for a "courtesy house check" with the Police Department.

**ALWAYS REMEMBER TO LOCK YOUR DOORS,
WINDOWS, AND SET YOUR ALARM EVEN IF LEAVING
FOR A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME.**

No law enforcement agency can function effectively without the concerned assistance of responsible citizens. We are depending on you to call and tell us whenever you observe suspicious persons or actions.

Please call the Alamo Heights Police Department immediately about all suspicious activity. We are your partners in the community. Do not worry about "bothering" the police or being embarrassed if your suspicions prove unfounded. Think, instead, about what could happen if you do not act. We thank you for your assistance in this effort.

ROBBERY PREVENTION TIPS

At Home

- Keep your doors and windows locked and do not open them to strangers.
- Do not allow your children to answer the door without your knowledge.
- Watch for anyone who may have followed you home.
- Keep your front entrance well lit and visible from inside your house.

While Shopping

- Be aware of who is around you so you know if you are being followed after cashing a check.
- Do not count out large quantities of cash in open view.
- Park in areas that are well lit.
- Avoid routine, such as cashing a check at the same time and location each week.
- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry when obtaining cash. Robbers look for people who appear to have lots of cash.
- When shopping, you should hold your purse close to your body, with the opening facing toward you; when walking with another person, the purse should be held between them and you. A man should carry his wallet in his front pants pocket; never in the back pocket or in his jacket.
- Do not allow yourself to become so burdened down with packages that you become a tempting target.
- If you are carrying several packages, ask a security officer to accompany you to your vehicle.
- When making purchases, do not advertise that you have a large amount of cash.
- Keep cash in small amounts in different pockets.
- Use debit/credit cards whenever possible.

While Driving

- Keep your doors locked, windows rolled up, and your car in gear.
- If your car is approached while you are stopped, try to safely drive away.
- Be aware whether you are being followed.
- If you are being followed, drive to a well lit public area and ask for help.

What To Do If You Are Being Robbed

- Stay calm. You will remember more about the suspect. Most suspects do not harm their victims.
- Do not resist the robber. Cooperate with the robber, but do not volunteer to do anything other than what is asked of you.
- Try to remember as much about the suspect as possible, including a vehicle description, license plate and direction of travel.
- Call 911 as soon as possible (from the scene if practical), and stay on the phone until an officer arrives to assist you.
- Complete a report with the responding officer.